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# Lake Norman Herald WEEKLY

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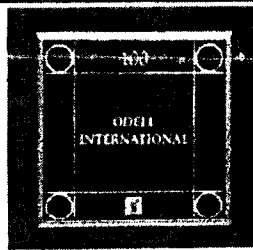


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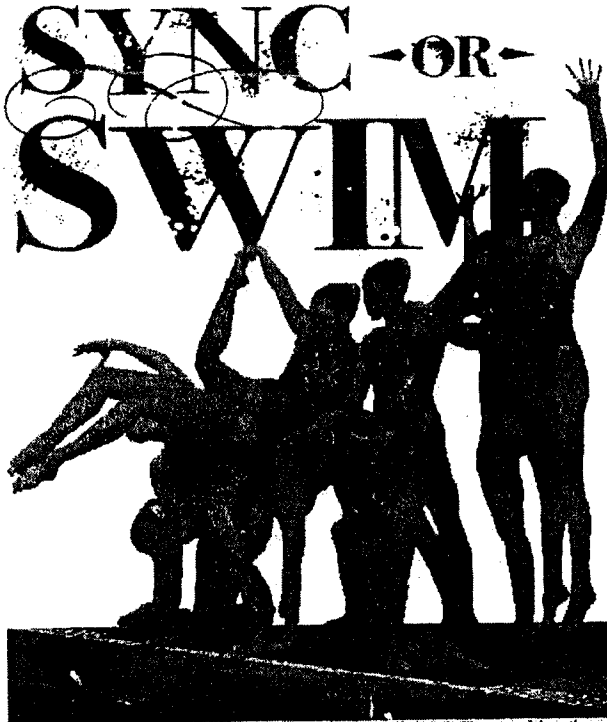
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Courtesy of Huntersville Family Fitness and Aquatics Center  
 Team USA displays its deckwork prior to performing its team routine last week at the UANA Pan American Junior Synchronized Swimming Championships. (Story on page 16)

## SWINDLED

Mini Madoff steals life savings of Davidson pilot

by Kenyon George Stanley  
 news@huntersvilleherald.com

DAVIDSON — Steve Wieland didn't expect to retire in 2007 when he was 57. He hoped to have a few more years traversing the skies as a commercial airline pilot. But after he was grounded because of medical problems, Wieland turned to a friend to help him prepare for the earlier-than-expected retirement.

During the next two years that friend swindled more than \$550,000 of Wieland's life savings. Now, the 59-year-old Wieland is struggling and trying to figure how he got caught in a nearly \$11 million Ponzi scheme.

Wieland, a former U.S. Air Force fighter pilot, has lived off his retirement checks and U.S. Airways pension since a broken back and diabetes clipped his wings. He began to worry about his financial future shortly thereafter. The stock market began to crumble and Wieland's nest egg started to dwindle. With his medical costs rising and no money coming in, Wieland turned to Gordon Grigg for help.

Grigg a money planner and life coach, who he met through a neighbor in 2005,

(more on page 8)

## Area schools to refill some teaching positions

by Andrew Batten  
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Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools officials are allocating six new teaching positions to three Lake Norman-area schools, after announcing they would hire 286 teachers to replace some of the hundreds laid off countywide in June.

Facing a tight budget year, the school system laid off more than 1,100 workers, including 665 teachers. But after the N.C. General Assembly approved a state budget Aug. 5, Superintendent Peter Gorman said he would use a one-cent sales tax increase to bring some of those teachers back.

The school system will re-hire 286 teachers. Sixty-eight of those have been allotted to schools throughout the county. Re-hiring those teachers will cost the

school system \$13.8 million.

"The last-minute decision by legislators to enact a tax increase to shore up state revenues has eased some of the budget pressure" on the school system, Gorman said. "Although we still have had to cut nearly \$100 million from our budget, it now appears that our allocation from the state will be slightly more than we expected."

In the Lake Norman area, Cornelius Elementary and Bailey Middle will each get one additional teacher. Cornelius currently has 30 teachers, and Bailey has 54 teachers.

North Mecklenburg High School will



Gorman

get four additional teachers to add to its 81 others.

Enrollment at the area's eight elementary, four middle and two high schools is projected to be 14,520 students for the 2009-10 school year, or about 11 percent of school system's 130,682-student population. Those schools have 626 teachers, about 10.3 percent of the school system's 6,075 teachers.

School officials said they made the teacher allotments based on each school's enrollment. But other county schools, which have fewer students and more teachers, were allotted more retired teachers.

For example, Garinger High School will have an estimated 1,915 students this year and 90 teachers. North

(more on page 26)

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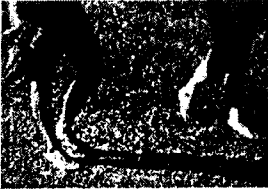
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## News

**Swindled**  
(continued from page 1)

visited Wieland's Davidson home in August 2007 armed with a laptop, a ballpoint pen and a sympathetic ear.

Grigg didn't want Wieland to worry about money and held an impromptu prayer session during the meeting. He didn't ask Wieland any questions about his finances, Wieland said.

"You get your relationship with Jesus back in order and leave your finances to me," Wieland recalls Grigg saying during their meeting.

Wieland signed over his 401K with investment company Charles Schwab to Grigg and his Tennessee-based company, ProTrust Management. He also gave Grigg a limited power of attorney.

A year later Wieland realized he would never see that money again.

During that time, Grigg managed to steal more than \$550,000 of Wieland's money, court records show. Wieland grew suspicious after repeatedly asking for documentation about where his funds were going and getting nothing. Grigg would eventually produce a document that said Wieland's money had been invested in New York investment firms, but that didn't satisfy Wieland.

He called two financial firms, Morgan Stanley and Kohlberg Kravis Roberts & Co., companies he was told had his money. They didn't, and said the documentation he had been given was a fake, court records show. Kohlberg Kravis Roberts & Co. reported Grigg to the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission and an \$10.9 million Ponzi scheme began to unravel.

FBI agents arrested Grigg in April on four counts of mail fraud and four counts of wire fraud. In April, Grigg pled guilty to all counts in a U.S. District County in Tennessee. Last week, Judge Aleta Trauger sentenced him to 10 years in

prison, much greater than the 6 to 8 years sentencing guidelines called for.

"It is not a violent offense, but it has done violence in many ways to his victims," Trauger said while imposing the sentence. "This case had a more vicious twist than Bernie Madoff."

She later called him a "mini Madoff," comparing Grigg with the disgraced money manager who was sentenced to 150 years in prison for stealing billions in a Ponzi scheme.

Grigg stole \$10.9 million from an estimated 60 victims since 1996, court records show. The victims were all friends or family members of Grigg. He used religion and prayer as a way to gain his victims' trust and always came into their lives when they had reached hard times, court records show.

Wieland traveled to Tennessee and spoke at Grigg's trial along with other victims. Grigg, he said, "came clothed in Jesus Christ, as a brother in God. He said, 'I'm praying for you and I'll take care of you.' Well, he took care of me alright."

But while Wieland said he's pleased with the sentence, he faces a bleak future. He will never fly again and his monthly medical bills cost more than his pension and retirement check combined. He didn't recoup any of his funds and is unsure how he'll pay his bills.

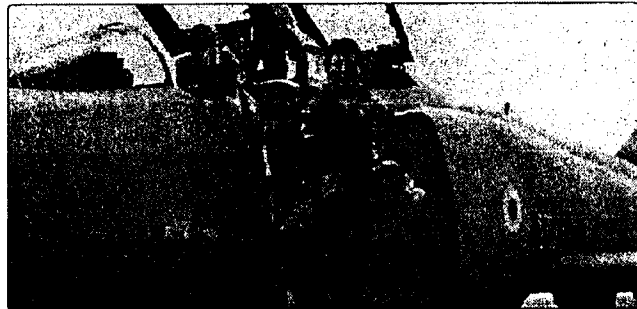
Of the \$10.9 million stolen by Grigg, \$6 million remains unaccounted for. Twenty-seven of the believed 60 victims have not recovered their money. Although the judge ordered Grigg to pay \$6 million in restitution, Wieland doesn't think he'll see any of his lost money. He hopes to get a detailed list of all the victims in order to file a class action civil suit against Grigg.

Wieland believes there are more victims out there, and he hopes they'll come forward.

"Grigg is the epitome of evil," Wieland said. "Some people are robbed by gunpoint, I was robbed by ballpoint pen." □



Steve Wieland



Steve Wieland steps out of a fighter jet's cockpit. Wieland who served nine years as a U.S. Air Force pilot recently lost a half-million of his life savings in a Ponzi scheme orchestrated by friend, Gordon Grigg.

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